



March 10, 2022

Testimony in support of House Bill 5204 An Act Concerning a Needs Assessment and Fair Share Plans for Municipalities to Increase Affordable Housing.

Good afternoon Chairman Williams and Chairman Lopes, Ranking members Poletta and Cicarella and honorable members of the Housing Committee and to the folks on this call. My name is Luis Ortiz, Bilingual Organizer with ConnCAN and a member of the Growing Together Connecticut. I am here to support HB 5204, a bill that would create new housing units, bring jobs to our communities most in need, and generate billions of dollars in revenue for Connecticut over the next decade.

It is no secret that the cost of housing is crippling families. Over 100,000 people are struggling to secure a safe, affordable home in a thriving, supportive community. This leads to families having to share housing which has adverse effects on the educational outcomes of the students in those households. Studies have shown that children who live in a crowded household at any time before age 19 are less likely to graduate from high school and tend to have lower educational attainment at age 25.

However, we can fix this. We can improve the housing options available, expand opportunities across the state, and nurture our cities, building on features that are already there, to ensure that they are thriving, vibrant places to live for everyone, no matter their race or background.

As an education organization, we support housing choices, because we can further advance racial equity in the state of CT, by helping many moderate and lower-income students of color gain access to the opportunities all kids need to reach their true potential.

Let's end the systems of exclusionary zoning and unjust housing developments that have divided our state making it one of the most segregated in the nation. Let's empower our communities with housing choices and let's allow students the opportunity to have an education that suits their needs and empowers their future. Let's grab our eraser and erase those redlines. Together by passing HB 5204 we can flip the script on a new page in Connecticut's history by turning it from one of the most segregated states into one of the most diverse and inclusive as we all know it can be.

I thank you for the opportunity to advocate and participate in democracy. I know you will do what's right.

Luis Ortiz
Bilingual Organizer
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